

Rodenticide Articles 18 and 77 Explained- 2022 Town Mtg

2022 Rodenticide Reduction Articles 18 (ByLaw Amendment) & 77, a Resolution to create an Integrated Pest Management Policy for the Town of Arlington (revised 4/25/22)

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Supported by unanimous vote of the Select Board, Conservation Commission, and Sustainable Arlington

The bottom line: The Select Board voted unanimously to support both articles 18 (reporting of target rodenticide use in Arlington; public education on benefits of Integrated Pest Management and the hazards of rodenticides) and 77/Resolution (creation of a unified IPM policy and phase out of SGAR use on Town Properties). The SB creatively suggested lifting the SGAR Phase-Out out of Article 18 and instead sending it to the state as special legislation. Our petition is that Arlington be granted local control to **restrict Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs)** and protect an important local resource, nesting Bald Eagles.

SGARs are the highly toxic rodenticides most used by pest companies in outdoor bait boxes, often inappropriately as a monthly program to prevent rodent pests from becoming a problem. These poisons are toxic enough to kill after a single meal, but they don't kill right away. Rather rodent pests, and non-target animals like squirrels and birds, continue to eat the poison, supercharging their bodies so that they become poison bombs for any predator. SGARs are what killed our eaglet in August, 2021. Importantly, only pest control professionals can apply SGARs to properties. They are not sold retail because of their dangers to health.

State "Preemption" of Local Control: The effort to create a phase out of SGARs in Arlington is complicated by a state pesticide law that claims sole authority to regulate the use and application of all registered pesticides. So local towns are prevented from further restricting the use of any pesticide. There is one mechanism open to towns however. We can file special legislation requesting the ability to carve out an exception for local reasons. This is the route the Select Board suggested that we use to reduce SGAR use town wide, on private and Town Property. Our goal? To protect an important Arlington resource, nesting bald eagles.

A Unified Town Integrated Pest Management Policy (IPM): We also have the Select Board's executive stamp of approval and the support of the Town Manager's office for crafting a unified pest management policy (Integrated Pest Management or IPM) for all Town properties (Article 77). Such a policy is rightly prepared by the Manager's Office, which knows best how each department contributes to its implementation.

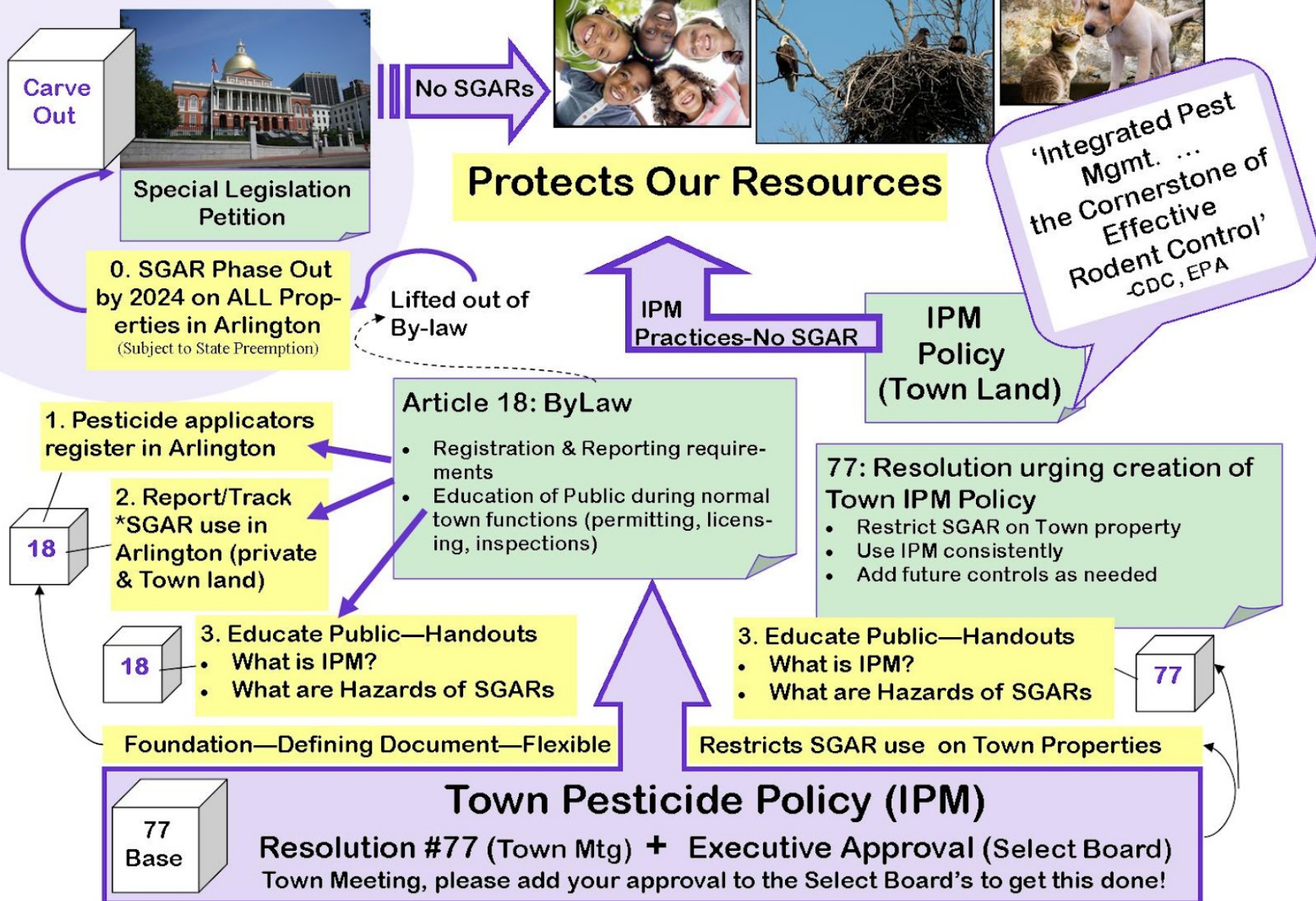
IPM emphasizes using **the least toxic yet effective options first** to control rodents. Foremost, Arlington's **IPM policy** will prevent routine use of SGARs on town land. Should rodent populations threaten public health, waivers will be available by appealing to the Board Of Health.

An IPM policy is the heart of our reforms, because it is the defining document for flexibly written by-law language. As written, the by-law amendment (Article 18) targets one class of rodenticides for reporting and tracking, **Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs)**. Open-ended language and Board of Health discretion provides flexibility to track other pesticides, now or in the future, as defined by the Town's pesticide policy. We view the flexible language as a strength because it provides a mechanism for easily updating the list of pesticides to be tracked as new knowledge emerges and Arlington's priorities and desires to protect valuable resources change in the future.

Education of the public about the value of Integrated Pest Management in controlling rodent pests, and the hazards of SGARs, is a key component of Article 18, as well as Article 77, the Resolution. We can't get enough education. The Article 18 language mentions natural intersection points between the Town and public (residents, businesses, contractors, etc.) - activities such as permitting, licensing, inspections, etc., as opportunities to educate the public. We expect however that the Board of Health will proactively go beyond these workflow educational actions and continue to offer periodic webinars to educate the public, as they did on 3/31 in a webinar, "[Oh Rats!](#)"

Article 18: ByLaw Amendment & Resolution 77

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* SGAR—Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides, which build up and poison the food chain more than any other rodenticide